

General Washburn wrote, "There is daily crowded upon my vision so much novelty and wonder which should be brought to the notice of the world and which, so far as my individual effort is concerned, will be lost to it if I do not record the incidents of each day's travel, that I am determined to do so and omit no details."

Images like this, at the base of the Upper Falls in Yellowstone, bespeak the extraordinary glory and splendor that General Washburn experienced in his expedition, and my family certainly experienced in ours.

Of course, here are the geysers, not just Old Faithful, captured here memorably by my 11-year old son, but literally dozens of active geysers described by General Washburn as a geyser "exposed to the sun, whose sparkling rays fill the ponderous column with what appear to be the clippings of a thousand rainbows." So it was on September 19, 1870, and so it is today.

But my greatest memory came, as it does for many Americans, at a place called Inspiration Point. It is a place, perhaps the very best view of the falls and the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone. It was there in August of 1870 that General Washburn wrote of this very picture and image, Mr. Speaker, "The place where I obtained the best and most terrible view of the canyon was a narrow projecting point situated two miles from the lower fall. Standing there, rather lying there for greater safety, I thought how utterly impossible it would be to describe to another the sensations inspired by such a presence. As I took in this scene, I realized my own littleness, my helplessness, my dread exposure to destruction, my inability to cope with or even comprehend the mighty architecture of nature." August 1870.

These visions inspired General Washburn's expedition, and they inspired the expedition of the Pence family this August and my young son, an amateur photographer.

But as I close, Mr. Speaker, in the words of General Washburn when he left Yellowstone he wrote, "We are all overwhelmed with astonishment and wonder at what we have seen, and we feel we have been near the very presence of the Almighty."

And so it is that as Americans in this generation, as in the past and in the future, because of the contribution of the National Park Service and its extraordinary stewards in the Yellowstone Park of Montana and Wyoming, Americans of this next century and every century, it is my hope, will be able to feel that same great presence amidst His great architecture of nature.

TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, 165 years ago in this House of Representa-

tives, John Quincy Adams came to the floor of the House to share letters from his constituents, letters which allowed him to speak about an issue that the House rules prohibited him from speaking about.

Mr. Speaker, the House of Representatives in 1838, 1840, and 1842 passed a rule prohibiting, banning, a discussion of slavery, the biggest blemish in American history, prohibiting the discussion of slavery, banning the slavery debate from the floor of the House of Representatives. As a result, John Quincy Adams, former President, then Member of Congress in those years, came to the House floor and read letters from various constituents, organizations in his Massachusetts district and throughout the State of Massachusetts.

Today we see something perhaps not quite as serious, but pretty serious, and that is the questions of whether President Bush told us the truth about Iraq, about the weapons of mass destruction, about Saddam Hussein's and Iraq's links to al Qaeda, and the focus the President has lost from the war on terrorism by attacking another country, as bad as Saddam Hussein was, attacking another country and not 'fessing up to the American people the real story.

□ 1945

So because the President, this leadership, and this Congress will not let us really investigate what, in fact, happened, what the President said, what the truth is, I am reading letters tonight from constituents all over Ohio brought to us by an organization called MoveOn.org. MoveOn.org has received almost half a million signatures of people asking for this investigation. And about 100,000 of those petitioners to MoveOn have sent letters to the United States Congress, and I would like to share some of those letters from citizens in my State concerned about investigating how it is that we ended up in Iraq.

From Lorain, Ohio, in my district, a petitioner writes, "Our leaders must respect our democracy. If our leaders lie or mislead their own people to support military action and to make an immense change in foreign policy, this greatly undermines our country. Saddam Hussein was evil, to be sure. Maybe we should have gone ahead with this invasion, but that decision should have been based on accurate reporting by the leaders and not by deceiving the American people."

From Cleveland, Ohio: "United States citizens, particularly the families of soldiers in Iraq, deserve to know the truth about whatever intelligence did or did not exist regarding weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and support for terrorism by Saddam Hussein prior to the war and about whether or not that intelligence was falsely represented to Congress and the American people to make the case for war."

From Marion, Ohio: "It is time for the Oval Office to quit hiding behind

false and misleading information. We were wrong to invade Iraq. Please help to spread honesty in the Federal Government."

From Cincinnati, Ohio: "I am very concerned about what led our government to undertake war in Iraq. Clearly the threat of imminent danger to the U.S. and her citizens was trumped up. It is an extremely serious situation which has led to the loss of over 150 American soldiers and thousands of Iraqi citizens, mostly civilians."

From Cleveland Heights, Ohio: "There is no graver abuse of trust than a leader who deceives his fellow citizens into sacrificing themselves, their sons and their daughters in the name of protecting their liberty. These charges are too serious not to pursue until every question is answered."

From Loveland, Ohio: "This is a very important issue. Our credibility in the world is already at grave risk. We can restore it in part by taking this misinformation seriously and tracking down the process that led to erroneous statements by Colin Powell to the United Nations and by President Bush in his State of the Union address. I implore you to consider the image in a non-partisan light and support an independent investigation."

From Columbus, Ohio: "As a decorated combat veteran and the parent of a currently-serving member of the U.S. Navy, both status that is not shared with many administration officials or Members of Congress, I gather, I am particularly concerned that there be no hint that our military forces are being used primarily for political ends." That was from Columbus.

From Cincinnati, Ohio: "As a daughter and sister of veterans, I am appalled that soldiers may have been lied to about the reasons they were sent to Iraq. Please support an independent, nonpartisan investigation to get to the truth of the administration's call to arms."

From Granville, Ohio: "It was obvious at the time that the Bush and Blair administrations were playing fast and loose with the facts in order to drum up support for a war they had wanted to wage since September 11. It is time that the American people and British citizens, as well as people of the world, learn the facts."

Mr. Speaker, these are letters from constituents in Ohio.

TAX RELIEF PROVEN TO STIMULATE THE ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CARTER). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, in late July Congress recessed and the Republicans headed back to their districts amid a firestorm of criticism from the left for passing record levels of tax relief.

Democratic candidates for President issued blistering condemnations of tax

relief, vowing to repeal the Bush tax cuts. News coverage painted the picture of a Nation questioning the value of tax relief. In a July 28 Washington Post column entitled, "Democrats Not Shying Away From Tax Talk: Candidates Discuss Raises, Not Cuts," of two of those candidates, both called for repeal of the cuts, a move The Washington Post notes would raise tax rates for all income taxpayers; reinstate the marriage penalty on joint filers, and shrivel the popular child tax credit for middle-income tax payers.

The article says that the Democratic tax increases would be used to provide universal health coverage and to rev up the economy. They actually believe raising taxes would rev up the economy.

Moving on down the line, two Senators, Senator KERRY and Senator LIEBERMAN, are on record suggesting raising some income tax brackets to pre-Bush levels. Senator EDWARDS called for raising some income tax brackets, and once again treating dividends as taxable income. Under his leadership, he would not only increase the newly lowered 15 percent capital gains rate; he would increase it to a whopping 25 percent.

Mr. Speaker, it appears that the Democratic leadership's primary economic policy can be summed up in 2 words: tax increases.

Fortunately, August must have been a painful month for those who lept on the tax increase bandwagon because today economists are finally giving credit to the President and the Republicans in Congress for passing tax relief and fueling economic growth. Tax relief, not tax increases, have revved up the economy. Critics of the tax relief legislation must be shocked to see that lower taxes are providing stimulus.

Today we see a stock market on the rise. The NASDAQ closed at a 17-month high. The Dow and the S&P 500 ended today at 15-month highs.

The headlines are revealing: "Manufacturing Index at an 8-Month High." "Chain Store Sales Rise."

"Construction Spending Inches Up."

"U.S. Growth Tops Forecasts."

"Fed Says Economy Shows Gains."

"Consumer Confidence Rises."

Mr. Speaker, the GDP, the broadest measure of the Nation's economy, grew at 3.1 percent in the quarter. That is up 1.4 percent in previous quarters.

Clearly, the signs are good and clearly the tax cuts are working. Now, there are sure to be some bumps in the road, but the facts are that relief is doing exactly what we said it would.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak on one other subject, a subject that our majority leader, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), came to the floor and talked about earlier today. He reaffirmed our commitment to control government spending, and I want to thank him for doing that. He knows that we provided tax relief to stimulate the economy, that we have attacked terrorism at its root and taken steps to

improve the quality of life for our troops.

Now is the time to direct attention to wasteful spending. Our freshman class has made its mission working on eliminating government waste, fraud and abuse. The momentum for true reform and reductions in spending are there. We have proved that tax cuts work, and we have the trust of the American People.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to address the House for 5 minutes out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

CONCERNS OVER IRAQI WAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, those of us who have taken an oath of office to serve the American people welcome the opportunity to come back to the United States Congress and to be able to help guide this Nation as we move into the 21st century.

A lot of activity has taken place over the August work recess; and I believe, Mr. Speaker, it warrants commentary and it warrants action.

More than 6 months ago as we looked to the future, and more than that time frame when we debated the question of war and peace as it relates to Iraq, there were many of us who vigorously opposed the administration's war in Iraq. We argued for a constitutional vote on this floor, to vote war up or down. As that was overridden and the President decided unilaterally to go to war and ignore the United Nations and NATO allies and others, we continue to suggest that following this war, recognizing and appreciating the greatness of those young men and women willing to offer themselves and sacrifice themselves for the principles of this Nation, that we should design an aftermath to Iraq.

We began to deliberate and to discuss how should we, in fact, secure Iraq; how should we, in fact, provide safety to the people, to provide peace to the people, democratization to the people, and certainly provide the protection to our young men and women on the ground. Unfortunately, this administration decided to go it alone. And lo

and behold, though we wish not to be able to say that this evening, all we can say is, I told you so.

We find in the papers of the last couple of days terrible atrocities. One, for example, is that there are bomb incidents almost every day. Might I say to the U.N., United Nations family, my deepest sympathy for the tragic loss of those who are on the ground for humanitarian purposes. We are also offering our deepest sympathy to the families who have lost their young men and women on the front lines and, yes, those lives that will continue to be lost.

We find out by recent reports in newspapers that a congressional study shows that the Army lacks the active duty troops to keep the current occupation force in Iraq past March of 2004 without getting extra help from either other services and reserves or other nations. It was not too long ago when we said to the administration, it is imperative that if you fought the war alone, then you clearly need to keep the peace in the multi-lateral posture with the United Nations, with NATO allies and even with allies from the Arab region. Being in the Arab region, in the Medius region in April, it was clear that our Arab nations wanted to participate in the peace, our friends in India wanted to participate in the peace. But were they asked? No.

As the President moves for a U.N. Security Council resolution, tentative as it is, I believe it is time for the President of the United States to take to the bully pulpit and restore the value to the United Nations, restore our friendship with the United Nations, and begin to put together before the U.N. Security Council a sincere effort, a sincere offering that we would like to collaborate in building the peace. There is no shame in working with friends or collaborating. There is no shame in promoting the United Nations, the very entity upon which we built after World War II in order to generate a forum that nations could come together and fight for peace as opposed to war. But yet this administration turned its back on a vehicle that could be helpful; and now here we come back, suggesting that we would like our friends to donate troops and money. Well, we cannot get that kind of action unless you show true sincerity.

To the President I say that this report is worse than we would like. Released on Tuesday by a nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, it said that if the Pentagon sticks to its plan of rotating active duty Army troops out of Iraq after a year, it will only be able to sustain a force of 67,000 to 106,000 using active duty and reserve and Marine forces.

We need help and there is no shame in that. I hope that the President will gather his thoughts and go to the United Nations in a collaborative way, not in an undermining way, not in undermining troops. I frankly support the